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GAYATRI-TREESA JOLLY, LAKSHYA IN SEMIS

On a day when Lakshya Sen (bottom pic) advanced via a walkover, Treesa Jolly (18) and Gayatri Gopichand (19), ranked No 46 in the world, became the first Indian pair to reach the last four in one of the most prestigious tournaments. The duo, who upstaged Olympic bronze-medallists at All England badminton, played their first international meet in Spain last May | P15

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Water disputes: Bommai to meet Shekhawat soon

Will take a delegation of state MPs, all-party legislators to Delhi to exert pressure, says CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE state government will take up issues concerning interstate water disputes with Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat soon to get clearances for projects, including Mekedatu balancing reservoir, Mahadayi and phase-3 of Upper Krishna Project(UKP), said Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai here on Friday.

Setting the process in motion immediately, Water Resources Minister Govind Karjol will meet Shekhawat in New Delhi on Monday or Tuesday and brief him about the status of projects. Soon after, Bommai too will call on the Union minister.

After a two-hour, marathon all-party meeting, in which Leader of Opposition Siddaramaiah and Bandeppa Kashempur of JDS too took part at Vidhana Soudha, Bommai said that a delegation of Karnataka MPs, including former prime minister HD Deve Gowda, will be taken to New Delhi to impress upon Shekhawat.

"I will meet the Union minister soon after the session and share details of the meeting with opposition leaders. If our attempts prove futile, I may lead an all-party delegation to the minister to exert pressure," he said.

Though the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) has held five to six meetings,

nothing fruitful has come out. "The state government will try to get another meeting fixed to get environmental clearances and nod for the detailed project report for Mekedatu," he said. CONTINUED ON: P4

ISSUES DISCUSSED

Environmental clearances for Mekedatu Balancing Reservoir and Mahadayi projects

Taking up of Upper Krishna Project(UKP) phase III

DECISIONS

To get a Cauvery Water Management Authority meeting fixed to decide on Mekedatu and get approval for DPR

Appeal to the CJI to appoint two judges to hear the UKP case as Andhra and Telangana have raised objections

Pressure from allies for Imran

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

WITH Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan struggling to save his government after 24 dissident lawmakers from his own party decided to vote against him in a no-trust motion in Parliament later this month, two of his allies suggested a 'minus-Imran Khan' formula to resolve the crisis.

Parallelly, Imran's loyalists stormed the Sindh House where the dissident lawmakers had taken sanctuary since Sindh is under the opposition Pakistan Peoples Party's control. But other reports suggested that by then the rebels had bolted.

EXPRESS READ

Live-in partner burns Dalit woman to death

A 26-year-old Dalit woman, who was working at a private company, was set ablaze by her live-in partner at Electronics City on March 15 and she died on Thursday | P3

Prominent dissident Ghulam Nabi Azad briefs the media after meeting interim Congress president Sonia Gandhi, in New Delhi on Friday | PTI

Azad, Sonia discuss patch-up

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR
@ New Delhi

THE Congress leadership's outreach to the dissidents continued on Friday with interim party president Sonia Gandhi meeting Ghulam Nabi Azad who shared his ideas on organisational revamp in the wake of the recent electoral drubbing in five states.

"The meeting was good and cordial. Discussions centred on how to prepare unitedly for the next assembly elections," Azad, a prominent member of the G-23 rebels, told the media after the meeting.

> The meeting was good and cordial. Discussions centred on how to prepare unitedly for the next assembly elections
>
> Ghulam Nabi Azad, Congress G-23 leader

In response to a specific query, Azad categorically said no one had asked Sonia to step down from the party's post. All members of the Congress Working Committee decided unanimously that she should continue as president. "We just had some suggestions that were shared," he said. Just a few days ago, another prominent G-23 member Kapil Sibal had demanded that the Gandhi family voluntarily step aside and give someone else a chance to lead the party. Even on Wednesday when the G-23 had a get together that was attended by 18 rebels, there was buzz that Sonia had reached out to Azad.

A highly placed party source said that the meeting of Azad with Sonia was positive. "Madam took forward the possibility of reconciliation during talks with with Azad. It was a positive development," the source said, adding almost all prominent issues articulated by the G-23 were discussed.

Sources also claimed the dissidents don't have a grudge against Sonia; they only want organisational elections within the party. On Thursday, Rahul Gandhi had met former Haryana CM Bhupinder Singh Hooda as part of the outreach.

Biden's warning to Xi against aiding invasion

Joe Biden

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

US President Joe Biden, in his first one-on-one with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping since November, warned him about the perils of siding with Russia in its ongoing invasion of Ukraine by providing military aid and equipment.

China's official Xinhua News Agency glossed over the warning and quoted Xi as saying, "Conflict and confrontation are not in the interests of anyone" and that "state-to-state relations cannot go to the stage of military hostilities". But a White House readout of the talks said Biden "described the implications and consequences if China provides material support to Russia as it conducts brutal attacks against Ukrainian cities and civilians". He also underscored his support for a diplomatic resolution to the crisis.

As for Xi, the state-controlled media quoted him as saying that China and the United States should "shoulder international responsibilities", adding "peace and security are the most valued treasures of the international community."

The White House said Biden detailed the efforts by the West to respond to the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, including by imposing cost on Russia.

Naveen's body to arrive in B'luru on Monday morning

G SUBHASH CHANDRA
@ Davanagere

THE mortal remains of medical student **Naveen Shekharappa Gyanagoudar**, who was killed at Kharkiv in Ukraine in the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war, is arriving in Bengaluru early on Monday morning.

MP Shivakumar Udasi said External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar confirmed that the body is being lifted from Kharkiv to Bengaluru through Poland. It has already reached Warsaw in Poland and will reach Bengaluru via Dubai.

Naveen's parents Shekharappa and Vijayalakshmi and brother Harsha, who are anxious to see the body, are making preparations for the final rites at Chalageri village.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai too confirmed the arrival of Naveen's body. At a press meet, he said the body will be airlifted from Warsaw on Saturday to Dubai and from Dubai it will be brought to the Kempegowda International Airport at 3 am on Monday. CONTINUED ON: P4

Will donate body to medical college: Father

Naveen's father Shekharappa told media persons that after completing the last rites to the departed soul, the body will be handed over to the SS Institute of Medical Sciences in Davanagere to help medical research.

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